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JOSHUA LEDERBERG

PRESIDENT

Dr. Fred C. Ikle  
Deputy Undersecretary of  
Defense for Policy  
The Pentagon  
Room 4E830  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Fred:

I noticed your reference to BW technology in your recent article in Foreign Affairs and well understand the validity of the analogy that you presented between it and the Manhattan project. You put it as a thought experiment; but I'd like to have the chance to discuss it with you further. There is real reason for concern that we may be entering into an epoch that will transform that image into a real technology race, but with the damage being on the part of threats from third parties to the super powers.

This matter is coming onto the agenda of the National Academy of Sciences Committee on International Security and Arms Control, which will be meeting in Moscow in early June. I hope I may have a chance to discuss these issues with you before that date. I will be in the Pentagon for the DSB on May 9 and will be calling to see if I can have a brief appointment with you during that day. If that is not convenient I will try to manage another trip.

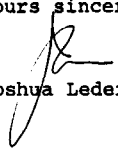
One of my concerns is how the Soviets are likely to read those remarks in Foreign Affairs. In their usual paranoid fashion, it will deepen their sense of certainty that we are well embarked in that race ourselves and that they should redouble their efforts in order to keep up with our inherent technological advantage. The reality concerning our own programs is of course quite otherwise at the present time; although there is grave danger that we may on both sides become recruited into a spiral, based on negative expectations, that will turn those fantasies into a reality. A further incentive to Soviet BW development would emerge if they feel frustrated in their nuclear threat capability by SDI.

Dr. Fred C. Ikle  
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I well realize the difficulty of demonstrating whether anything that we do can have any influence on Soviet behavior; but these are now policy considerations of the highest gravity that I urge be considered quite seriously.

Yours sincerely,

  
Joshua Lederberg

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